



Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program

Food and Ag Sciences graduate fellowship awards enabling students to participate in higher education to meet national needs

The Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program (NNF), in partnership with eligible institutions of higher education, enable students to enter into and complete graduate training to meet the expertise needs of the national food systems domain.

This partnership contributes to the continued national supremacy in the scientific arena of food and agriculture. However, it is necessary to examine the responsibilities of each aspect of this partnership. Firstly, the awardee enters into an agreement to recruit and train eligible students as National Needs Fellows. Often, a question that arises is where are the students coming from who are trained as National Needs Fellows. Another common question (or lament) is that there are NOT enough eligible U.S. citizens or U.S. Nationals who may be recruited to

be National Needs Fellows.

Secondly, the funding agency, CSREES, has NNF program goals into which each award feeds. The Academic Competitive Council Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) objectives are embedded into NNF.

Thirdly, the student trainees are selected for their interest and commitment to excelling in learning and scholarship. They will become knowledge experts in their targeted expertise shortage area.

Finally, all segments of the partnership have a responsibility for stewardship of public funds. Are we all doing our part?

We bring accountability out in the open. We add clarification of roles and responsibilities.

Awardee Reporting

What Makes Program Reporting Effective?

- ♦ *Understanding that each award is a step leading to achieve the goal of training knowledge experts to meet national targeted expertise shortage in the food systems domain;*
- ♦ *Providing information about ACCOMPLISHED activities, and resultant outputs or outcomes associated with funded project. NOTE: This is not a repeat of the objectives and planned approach from the funded application;*
- ♦ *Fulfilling the awardee obligation to effectively manage the funds provided for student training through comprehensive annual status reports;*
- ♦ *Increasing, as outlined in funded proposal, recruitment; mentorship and retention of multicultural diversity as highly skilled personnel entering the food systems domain;*
- ♦ *Providing fellows with learning opportunities to enhance their technical and global competence skills, including International experiential learning opportunity for eligible USDA NNF Fellow through IRTA support;*
- ♦ *Disseminating widely, activities for awarded graduate training project.*

In This Issue:

- ♦ Frequently Asked Questions
- ♦ 2007 Project Directors' Meeting
- ♦ NNF Program Reporting
- ♦ FY 2008 Application Due in Spring via grants.gov
- ♦ Relevant Links

Newsletter Goals

Goals of NNF Newsletter

- Facilitate information exchange;
- Enhance the quality of graduate education in the food systems domain with thought-stimulating commentary;
- Provide forum to offer information about experiential learning opportunities that enhance expertise development;
- Share opportunities for collaboration;
- Identify thematic areas that feed into policy and guidance development for graduate education;
- Managing awards—fiduciary duties.

Contact Us

Program Office

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**** Preferred Contact for Ready Response**

07 Award Snapshot:

- **1. Agricultural Genomics and Bioinformatics** – specifically in fundamental science, tools, resources and applicability
4 of 20
- **2. Natural Resources and the Environment** – particularly in forest ecosystem health and restoration
4 of 11
- **3. Agricultural Systems and Natural Resource Engineering** – specifically in wood and fiber engineering
1 of 7
- **4. Agricultural Management and Economics** – specifically in agricultural trade policy
5 of 16
- **5. Food Science** – specifically in food safety
3 of 15
- **6. Human Nutrition** – specifically in obesity and diet
1 of 6
- **7. Sciences for Agricultural Biosecurity** – particularly in animal pathology and food animal diagnostics
2 of 2
- **8. Training in Sustainable Sciences** (environmental, social and economic disciplines) for food, agricultural and environmental systems particularly in sustainable ecosystems and functional integrative natural resources management
4 of 14

Funded 24 of 91 applications received

Reporting Requirements for National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program

Reporting Guidance as provided in: (a) 7 CFR PART 3402; (b) Notice of Award; and (c) Request for Applications

- i) the required reporting for NNF Grants to Program Office:
 - Appointment of Fellows (Entry Form)
 - End of Fellow eligibility for stipend or termination of Fellow (Exit Form).
 - Annual Update—Progress of Each Fellow in Graduate Training.
- ii) required reporting on progress of funded training grant project in CRIS:
 - Providing update on progress of the graduate training grant for the funded targeted expertise shortage area as a whole and not of the individual fellow;
 - Training progress to meet needs of TESA of fellows as a group.
- iii) the financial reporting requirements must be met as outlines in the Notice of Award Document.
- iv) reporting for IRTA funding must follow the requirements outlined for the IRTA.

The Program Office, and Office of Extramural Programs review all submitted report. Reports that are not acceptable are returned for action by awardee. Where necessary, NNF funds that are not being managed as outlined in the regulations and in accord with CSREES guidance will be returned to the agency.

In FY 2007: 91 submitted proposals requested over 19 million dollars; Congress appropriated 3.7 million to fund awards for NNF

Understanding No-Cost Extension

Request for No-Cost Extension to a current award must be made in accordance with the guidance in the Award Terms and Conditions. The request is accomplished by a progress report and all other reporting requirements must be up-to-date. Reporting in a timely manner is the responsibility of the awardee.

The Request for No-Cost Extension should be initiated with the Office of Sponsored Programs (or equivalent) on the awardee's campus. The contact at CSREES is in the Awards Management Branch of the Office of Extramural Programs at CSREES and NOT the NNF Program Office. To determine who the administrative contact is for your award—see the Notice of Award document.

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html>

Federal Regulations for NNF Grants

7 CFR PART 3402: The regulations can be read in its entirety on the Internet. Using this resource will ensure effective management

http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_05/7cfr3402_05.html

Question: Why is 7 CFR PART 3402 so important?

Answer: Answers questions about eligibility; financial provisions; appointment; progress reporting, etc.

Question: What reporting for NNF should be made in CRIS?

Answer: Beginning in 2003, education awardees have been submitting reports through CRIS. Accomplishment reporting related to the goals and objectives of the awarded project is required.

Question: Interested in Program Overview?

Answer: See 7 CFR PART 3402.6.

Question: Interested in definitions for the NNF program?

Answer: See the Request for Applications and 7 CFR PART 3402.2.

2007 Project Directors Meeting

The first joint NNF and Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Grants Programs Project Directors and Beneficiaries Conference was held Oct. 16-17. There were 75 attendees made up of 45 project directors or program administrators; 20 students; 10 invited speakers from academia, private sector, other USDA agencies. [Coming soon to agency NNF grants funding opportunity page.]

The 2008 CSREES education grants project directors meeting is being held in conjunction with the annual North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) conference. **See 2008 Call for Abstracts:** <http://www.nactateachers.org/cfabstracts.htm>

June 10-13, 2008 in Logan, UT.

Award Management by Project Directors:

♦ **The Recruitment—Each** project director (PD) has the responsibility to recruit committed students with the highest probability of training success to meet the Targeted Expertise Shortage Area of the funded project.

- This entails ACTIVE recruitment using a multidimensional recruitment strategy to meet the 18-month recruitment interval.

- Failure to complete recruitment will lead to monies being returned to CSREES.

- The recruitment interval begins with the effective award **Start Date**.

- If recruitment is outsourced, the PD still is responsible for providing a completely-filled in Fellowship Appointment form—CSREES Form 2010—for each Fellow.

♦ **Fiduciary Duties**

- Federal funds for graduate training through NNF grants must be acknowledged.

- The PD has the responsibility to ensure that administrators, faculty and students acknowledge CSREES funding for graduate training funds under an award.

- The CSREES Grant Award Number must be in the acknowledgement.

- Expenditure of funds is determined by the awardee following the federal regulations governing NNF grants.

- Follow all guidance provided in the Notice of Award document; RFA and federal regulations for funded project.

♦ **No-Cost Extension—The Award Terms and Conditions MUST be followed.**

CSREES — Funding Intellectual Capital Development

Send News About Achievements of National Needs

Graduate Fellows to include:

Conference Presentations

Publications (including thesis and dissertation citations)

Awards/Recognitions

Professional Appointments

Past-Fellows

Would you like to be featured? Send us your information and photo with a publication release.

Contact Us: NNF@CSREES.USDA.GOV

Application Due for Next NNF Program Cycle:
Spring, 2008

Look for Application Package on grants.gov by mid-winter 2008

CFDA: 10.210/Program Code: KK

Pertinent Reference Information

Annual NNF Program Summaries

http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/serd/serd_grants.shtml

Accomplishments of Funded NNF Projects

<http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>

CSREES Award Terms and Conditions

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/termsa205.pdf>

Appointment and Exit Forms/Annual Update (Student Progress)—CSREES Form 2010

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/pdfs/natl_needs.pdf

CRIS Reporting (Annual Progress of Funded Project)

<http://cwf.uvm.edu/cris> (For Help: 202-690-0009).

Other CSREES Education Funding Opportunities

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/offices/>